

to keep the individuals together (Rajesh Gopal 1992, FUNDAMENTALS OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT). This coinciding of faecal stations suggest that chinkaras leave the responsibility of finding a suitable habitat to blue bulls, it may suggest that chinkaras have also adapted it to live in small herds.

Secondly, chinkaras are generally reported in homogeneous herds of 3-4 with some exceptions of up to 25. But in Kaimur Sanctuary, chinkaras were seen in heterogeneous groups with blackbucks. Big herds of about 25-35 Blackbuck and chinkara were sighted. It was observed that this heterogeneous grouping was mainly when chinkaras had their young with them. A pack of 2-3 jackals separated by about 3-4 metres from each other were also observed at a distance of about 100 metres from these heterogeneous groups of blackbuck and chinkara. Jackals are still not considered as regular predators by smaller herbivores too, and hence, presence of jackals attracts very little or no attention. The jackals move behind or sideways

to the herd, and when a fawn gets separated from the herd, it is instantly killed by the pack. Another significant observation contrary to Prater's observation was that these heterogeneous groups were led by a well-built male blackbuck rather than an old and vigilant female as reported by Prater (1948). This heterogeneous grouping by chinkara suggests their inability to protect their young from common predators like jackals, and hence, chinkaras join with blackbucks for protection.

December 21, 1994

K. PRAVEEN RAO<sup>1</sup>  
ABHAY K. SINGH<sup>2</sup>  
PARAMANAND<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Divisional Director, Bulandshahar Social Forestry Division,  
Bulandshahar, U.P.

<sup>2</sup> Divisional Director, Muzaffarnagar Social Forestry Division,  
Muzaffarnagar, U.P.

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Conservator of Forests, South Gorakhpur Forest  
Division, Gorakhpur, U.P.

## 11. SIGHTING OF A GREAT CRESTED GREBE *PODICEPS CRISTATUS* (LINN.) NEAR BASSEIN IN MAHARASHTRA

On Sunday, May 3, 1992, while returning from a bird watching visit to Bassein Fort in the early afternoon. I stopped at Papdi Tank where I observed a bird of domestic duck size with a relatively long slender neck and a sharp pointed bill. This I recognised as a grebe having observed many at close quarters on the Bosphorous, in Turkey. The bird had a dark flattish crown to the head, an orange yellow bill with a dark upward curving line from the gape to the eye. Above the eye was white. At the back of the neck the plumage was black changing through grey to a white fore neck. Close to the waterline at the base of the neck the bird showed traces of golden brown. The back was black brown with silver grey or white at the waterline. There was no obvious tail. The bird made no attempt to dive and fed purely on the surface apparently pursuing insects. Whilst it was manoeuvring it was possible to see through the green murky water that the feet were yellow.

The bird was observed for approximately 15 minutes at distances varying between 15 metres and 75 metres through 8 x 40 binoculars. A subsequent visit to the tank in late June revealed that at the time of observation the water would have been not more than 300 mm deep.

I identified this bird as a Great Crested Grebe because

of the white fore neck, the dark line from gape to eye, the white above the eye and the yellow feet which are indicative of the species. There was no head adornment as would be expected for mature birds of that species at that time of year in the northern hemisphere. However, Simmons (1989) states that first year birds do not breed and this could account for the apparent winter plumage so late in the season.

The only confusion species considered was the Rednecked Grebe which has a yellow bill tipped black but this option was dismissed because the Rednecked Grebe has a dark foreneck, no white above the eye and the feet, according to Ali and Ripley (1983) are blue/black.

The Great Crested Grebe is not included in the checklist of the Birds of Maharashtra (Abdulali 1981) and the southern limit of Western India quoted by Ali and Ripley is Gujarat. This would therefore appear to be an extension of the range of the Great Crested Grebe into Maharashtra to near Bombay.

February 8, 1994

ALAN A. BEATTIE  
71/C, Neha Apartments,  
Juhu Tara Road,  
Juhu, Bombay-400 049.

### REFERENCES

SIMMONS, K.E.L. (1989): The Great Crested Grebe. Shire Publications, Aylesbury, U.K.  
ABDULALI, H. (1981): Check List of the Birds of Maharashtra. Bombay

Natural History Society, Bombay.  
ALI, S. & S.D. RIPLEY (1983): Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, Compact edition. Oxford University Press, Delhi.